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## BULU TALES.

BY GEORGE SCHWAB.

## I. WHAT HAPPENS TO WIVES WHEN THEY THINK MORE HIGHLY OF ANYTHING ELSE THAN OF THEIR HUSBANDS.

It happened thus. Great hunger came upon the forest. Then Male-Gorilla took his wives, and they all went walking. As they walked, they found an éngong<sup>1</sup>-tree laden with ripe fruit. Then Male-Gorilla said to himself, "I am going to act wisely. I will test my wives." So he climbed an ôtunga-tree which grew beside the éngong-tree, and bent it down to the ground. His wives climbed it and from it to the éngong-tree, where they began eating with the greediness of hunger. Then said Male-Gorilla thus to his wives: "As you are eating up there, is it me or is it the fruit you like most?"<sup>2</sup> They answered him thus: "We like only you," and they came down laden with fruit. So he, too, ate until he was tired eating. Then they all returned to their village, passing the village of Chimpanzee, where there was also great hunger.

Now, when Husband-Chimpanzee saw the stains of the éngong-fruit on the hands and faces of Male-Gorilla and his wives, he asked of them the location of the tree éngong in the forest. Male-Gorilla instructed him.

Then Husband-Chimpanzee called all his wives, and they walked to the place of the tree éngong in the forest. They became tired searching for the place where Male-Gorilla and his wives had climbed up, until suddenly Husband-Chimpanzee spoke thus: "Ke! it was by the path of the ôtunga." So he climbed up and bent it to the ground, and then his wives climbed on to it and over on to the tree éngong. At once they began to eat greedily. "I will test them," said Husband-Chimpanzee to himself. So he asked, "You, up there! is it myself or is it the éngong-fruit which you like most?" They thus to him: "We like a bunch of éngong-fruit." Again Husband-Chimpanzee asked, "Myself or éngong-fruit, which is it you surpass liking?" They thus: "A bunch of the fruit éngong." So Husband-Chimpanzee let go of the ôtunga-tree, and began to eat the fruit that his wives dropped.

It happened that a man walking in the forest came to the éngong-

<sup>1</sup> Éngong-tree (*Trichoscypha* sp.), whose large plum-like fruit makes a blood-red stain, is much sought after by both natives and animals.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "surpass liking."

tree. Husband-Chimpanzee saw him, ran away and hid himself. When Man looked up into the tree and saw the chimpanzees eating, he quickly returned to his village, called the people, who went out to the tree éngong, where they saw the chimpanzees. "Woe is us!" said Wives-of-Chimpanzee. "Let us quickly descend by way of the ôtunga!" But they could not reach it, so all were killed, dying with a great dying. Thus did Wives-of-Chimpanzee suffer because of their greed.

## 2. TURTLE DECEIVES ZOÉ,<sup>1</sup> GIVING LEOPARD THE BLAME FOR STEALING ZOÉ'S DAUGHTER.

It happened thus. Zoé made preparations for a great dance, inviting all his forest friends to come on the night that the moon would begin to (wane).<sup>2</sup> When Turtle heard of it, he said, "Woe is me! Leopard will be there! He and I are very great enemies."

So Turtle went to Porcupine's village to ask what he should do. Porcupine answered him thus: "Go to Okpweng<sup>3</sup> and ask him for his horns. Wear them; and when you meet Leopard, tell him it was not Turtle, but Viper, who killed Leopard's mother," said Porcupine.

So Turtle left Porcupine and went to Okpweng, begging him for his horns for a night. Okpweng answered, "Take them." Then Turtle went to the dancing-place.

Now, Turtle and Leopard met at the joining of the path, near Zoé's village, which they entered together. As soon as Zoé's daughters saw them coming, both fell in love. Turtle spoke thus in his heart: "There will be a blood-feud here to-night." As night fell, Leopard felt<sup>4</sup> great hunger in his stomach: so he took up a fruit of the *adjap*-tree<sup>5</sup> and ate it, leaving only a small piece.

Turtle saw Leopard eating. Now, Turtle wanted to marry Zoé's younger daughter. So he went to her hut, where she was ornamenting herself<sup>6</sup> for the dance, and said thus: "Ah, Daughter-of-Zoé! you will

<sup>1</sup> Zoé, the African civet-cat, *Viverra civetta*.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "split."

<sup>3</sup> Okpweng, the small mouse-colored antelope, *Cephalophus melanorheus*.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, Bulu and other South Kamerun Fan peoples say "hear" for "feel," whether hunger, pain, cold, thirst, etc.

<sup>5</sup> *Adjap* or *ajap* tree (*Mimusaps jave*, Lang. Eng.). The fruit, when its skin is pierced, exudes a white, sticky, stringy *latex*, which soon coagulates, and adheres to the fingers, mouth, or anything with which it comes in contact, much as does coagulating rubber *latex*.

<sup>6</sup> The ornamenting of the Fan women of the Southern Kamerun, outside of brass and beads, consists mainly of redwood-powder and oil. The body may be entirely smeared with redwood-powder, and then spots of oil in ornamental rows be made with the tip of the finger, or thick oil may be poured on the coiffured head, and allowed to run down the face, neck, and body.

get a real woman's present if you will go out behind the *adjap*-tree and await me, as soon as you hear the dance-drum begin to talk."<sup>1</sup>

As the moon began to rise, Zoé called all his guests to come to the place near the palaver-house. "Who will begin the dance, and who will pound the drum for him?" asked Zoé. "I will; and Leopard, who surpasses every one in the beating of the dance-drum, he will pound for me." Zoé thus: "Yes, Okpweng, even so shall it be."

So Leopard went to the dance-drum and began, while Turtle danced. And even as he danced, Turtle began to sing, "He! He! Where is beautiful Youngest-Daughter-of-Zoé? Has not he on whose mouth the *adjap*-fruit has stuck, has not even he hidden her to elope with him? He! He! Why is she not at the dance?"

The guests all looked at one another, but no *adjap*-fruit did they see sticking to the mouth of any one. No, not so much as would fill the eye of a needle. "He! He! under the *adjap*-tree she awaits him. The fruit on his hands stuck to hers! He! He!" continued Turtle as he danced.

Then rose Zoé and went to the *adjap*-tree, where he found his youngest daughter with *adjap*-fruit on her hands, which Turtle had put there as a sign that he might know her in the dark. Zoé carried her back. As Turtle saw them coming, he sang, "He! He! Why does the drum's head stick to the hands of the drummer? He! He!"

"It is even as Okpweng sings," said Zoé, who went over to Leopard and looked at his face. "I invited Leopard, and he is spoiling my village by way of thanks for my friendship!" So Zoé took his spear and wounded Leopard, so that he died. Then said Zoé to all the guests, "And where can I find a son-in-law who can surpass Okpweng in cunning?" So Turtle took her to his village.

### 3. HOW TURTLE INHERITED LEOPARD'S GOODS.<sup>2</sup>

It happened thus. Leopard and Turtle arose, and said they would go to the forest to camp and hunt and set traps. So they left their villages and went. They walked through the forest until they found a place to build a shelter.

When they had built it, they said, "Now we'll go out and set traps." So each went his own way into the forest, where he set his traps. When Leopard had finished setting his traps, Turtle set a noose-trap near a log. Then they both returned to the camp. Night fell. At dawn they went out to look at their traps to see if anything had been caught. Leopard had caught many animals in his traps.

<sup>1</sup> All musical instruments, drums included, are said to "talk." They have "good" and "bad" voices, according to whether they are pleasing in tone to the Fan ear or not pleasing.

<sup>2</sup> Variant of JAFL 27 : 284.

These he took along. He came upon Turtle, whom he found near a tree from which a noose-trap was suspended.

Then Leopard said to him, "Ah, my Brother Turtle! and do people set traps to catch animals as you have set this one?"

Turtle asked of him, "Ah, Leopard! how is it that traps are set? Show me how it is done."

So Leopard cut the end off a sapling, dug the shallow pit for the noose-trap, and then set the trap for Turtle. Now Turtle said, "Ah, Leopard! show me also how it is an animal can get caught in that thing you have made." Leopard answered him, "Is it that you wish to snare me?" Turtle thus to him: "I'll come quickly and release you."

So Leopard put his head through the noose of the trap, which caused the sapling to spring up, suspending Leopard in the air. Leopard struggled with a great struggling to free himself. Turtle took up his spear, wounded Leopard, who quickly died. Then Turtle cut him into pieces, took all the animals he had caught, put them into a basket, and went to his village.

Soon the wives of Leopard came to him, asking what had become of their husband. Turtle thus: "If he comes not to-day, he'll never come. This he said to me when we parted in the forest. He was tired living with homely wives like you, he said. But in my eyes you are all surpassingly beautiful."

Then the wives of Leopard went back to their village, waiting even until nightfall for the return of their husband Leopard. At last the head wife said, "And why is it that we wait here for him in whose eyes we are ugly?" So they took their baskets and all the things of Leopard's village, and went to live with Turtle. And thus it was that Turtle became rich at Leopard's cost.

#### 4. HOW KNOWLEDGE SPOILS FRIENDSHIP.

It happened thus. The two young animals named Young-Leopard and Young-Otter lived in friendship all the time, never thinking of their fathers. When they were together, they did not know that one could kill the other.

Suddenly they separated one day, the one going to his village to see his father, the other doing likewise. As they were in the palaver-house, Father Leopard said to Young-Leopard, "Never again play with Young-Otter, seize him and bring him here. Father Otter, in his palaver-house, said to Young-Otter, "When you play again with Young-Leopard, be sure that it is on the river-bank, near the water."

Day dawned, and the two playmates met again. Young-Leopard addressed Young-Otter thus: "Come, let us play!" Then Young-Otter answered, "The thing your father told you, that same thing did

my father tell me." Now Young-Leopard tried to seize Young-Otter, but he jumped into the river and disappeared.

Thus it happens when two friends hear the things they should not know.

#### 5. HYRAX'S ADVICE FALLS ON DEAF EARS.<sup>1</sup>

It happened thus. Men planted a field of *ngung*.<sup>2</sup> When Hyrax saw it, he called all the forest animals to his village. To them he said, "To-day I saw a large field. It was filled with the bad plant called *ngung*. Therefore I tell you thus: let us go and destroy the whole field."

To this they answered, "We came because you called us to talk a palaver; but this plant you call *ngung*, what can it do to us?"

Hyrax spoke thus: "Even though you scold me, I know that we shall perish; for I know that bad plant, and what it will do to us in the days to come."

Then all the animals separated, and returned to their villages; but the plant *ngung* quickly grew to maturity.<sup>3</sup> Men now came, cut and peeled it, and spread the bark out in the village streets that day. Then, after they had dried it, men made it into fibres, which they twisted on their thighs into strong cords. When enough cords had been made, they wove hunting-nets of them. Then said the men, "Come on! it's time to go to the forest with our nets to hunt." So they went. The nets were set up. Men and their dogs made a great noise, driving the animals before them into the nets, where other men speared them, so that they died. Then men returned to their villages laden with the bodies of animals.

Again Hyrax called a meeting of the surviving forest-dwellers. They came. "Death has come to us. Did I not say it would? Did I not tell you to come and help eat up the plant called *ngung*? And you all refused to listen." So said Hyrax, and broke up the meeting.

#### 6. DO THE THINGS YOU CAN DO.<sup>4</sup>

It happened thus. Leopard and Hawk became friends. One day Leopard went to Hawk's village to pay him a visit. Hawk said to himself, "What thing is it that I'll cook for Leopard? I have nothing on hand." Then he flew up into a tree. A fowl came into the village street, *Kpwing!* Hawk swooped down and caught it. He took it and gave it to Wife-Hawk to cook for Leopard.

<sup>1</sup> Variant of JAFL 27: 272; see also pp. 410-411, 418, of this number.

<sup>2</sup> *Ngung*, a plant of the family Rubiaceae, *Gaertnera paniculata*, Beuth.

<sup>3</sup> *A nga bo benya boto*; literally rendered, "they became real men," or matured.

<sup>4</sup> Compare p. 408 (No. 4) of this number. The present tale bears a striking resemblance to the North American stories of the bungling host.

After five nights had passed, Hawk went to Leopard's village to pay him a visit. "Woe is me! I have nothing to set before Hawk," said Leopard to himself. Now he remembered how Hawk had caught the fowl for him, so he climbed into a tree and waited. Soon a fowl came into his village street. *Kpwung!* Leopard jumped down to seize it. His bones were broken *ne pfu!* Then his wives came and made a great mourning over him. Thus it happens when one tries to do the things of another which are strange to him.

#### 7. DOG TRIES TO DO SAME AS ELEPHANT, AND GETS BURNED.<sup>1</sup>

Dog went on a walk, and came to Elephant's town. Elephant went to his garden to cut a bunch of plantains to set before his guest. Then he kindled a fire in the street, set his pot on it, and waited for the plantains to cook. When they were nearly done, Elephant put his foot into the fire, took it out, and put it into the pot of plantains. Thus he filled his pot with fat.<sup>2</sup> Again he did this, and called for another pot, which he filled with the fat from his foot. Then he set his food before his guest, who ate until his abdomen was distended tight as a drum-head.

After a time Dog arose, saying to his host, as he was about to depart, "In three days you'll come to see me." So Elephant started for Dog's village on the third day, as requested. Dog went to the garden and cut plantains, which he had cooked for his guest. They also brought him another pot. Then he put his foot into the fire and burned it with a great burning, so that it fell off. Great were the cries he uttered as he drew his leg from the fire.

Then said Elephant, "You really are a foolish and deceitful fellow to invite me to a feast, and then try to provide for it in this way."

#### 8. WHY THE SHEEP ARE ALWAYS FOUND GUILTY.<sup>3</sup>

Turtle went out walking in the forest, looking for game. He found a kola-nut under a tree, and, looking up, saw that the kola-nuts were ripe enough to pick. As he was standing under the tree, with the shells of the kola-nut pod lying near him, Leopard happened along. Turtle spoke to him thus: "Ah, Leopard! some one has been eating my kola-nuts."

So Leopard went home, beat the village-drum, calling all the forest-dwellers to come to talk a palaver. As the animals were gathering for the palaver, Turtle said to Leopard, "You will know the guilty ones when you see them trembling."

<sup>1</sup> See note 4, p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> Natives believe, that, were an elephant to put his foot on or into fire, the fatty tissue in the foot would exude oily fat. So fond of and hungry for fat meats are they, that it is next to impossible to obtain any fat animal for a zoölogical specimen from them.

<sup>3</sup> West African sheep, when standing still, are all of a tremble.

Now the palaver began. As Leopard looked at the assembled forest-dwellers, he noticed that all the sheep were trembling. "Eke!" said he, "and why should we continue this palaver? There are the guilty ones. See them tremble!"

So he called his children, who seized and killed the sheep.

#### 9. WHY PANGOLIN DWELLS ALONE IN THE FOREST.<sup>1</sup>

Pangolin took a wife to himself. When she bore her child, she took an oath to eat no more real food.<sup>2</sup> Nothing but meat would she eat.

So Pangolin went out. He came to a bare rocky hill, on top of which stood a dead tree. He beat his drum, calling all the animals to come and be cut to relieve their pains.

Mian<sup>3</sup> was the first to arrive. He spoke thus: "I have come to be cut." Pangolin thus: "First climb the dead tree." Mian climbed it. "Now slide down upon the rock, so that the healing cuts I am going to make will properly work a cure." Mian slid down, fell upon the rock, and died.

Then Buffalo came, and said, "I have come to be cut for the curing of my pains." Pangolin thus: "Climb the dead tree." He climbed. "Slide down the tree, so that the healing cuts will properly work a cure," said Pangolin. Buffalo slid down, fell upon the rock, and killed himself.

Now Turtle said to himself, "What is going on there? All the animals have gone at the call of Pangolin's drum, but none do I see returning." He went out, picked up a large fruit and put it into his bag. Then he went to see Pangolin. "I've come to be slashed for healing," he said, his eyes searching the rocks where he saw the hair of animals scattered everywhere. "Climb the tree," said Pangolin. Turtle climbed up. "Jump!" Turtle threw the fruit from his bag. It made a great noise, *nekpwik!* as it hit the rock. Pangolin came from his shelter to pick up Turtle, as he had picked up the other animals. He searched and searched, but did not find him.

Turtle called down from the tree thus: "Eké! so that's the way you kill the animals!" Pangolin began to climb the tree to seize Turtle, who slid down and reached the forest. When he reached his village, he called a great meeting of the forest-dwellers, telling them to keep away from Pangolin, as he was trying to get meat for his wife. From that day to this they have avoided Pangolin, leaving him to dwell alone.

<sup>1</sup> See JAFL 27 : 266; also p. 417 (No. 17) of this number.

<sup>2</sup> Real food, substantial food, in contrast to food which helps the heart, which we would call "dessert."

<sup>3</sup> Mian, the antelope *Cephalophus leucocastec*. The Bulu is *je bo* ("what makes" or "what does").

10. YOUNG OKPWENG<sup>1</sup> LEARNS OBEDIENCE AT THE COST OF HIS LIFE.

Mother Okpweng told her youngest child thus: "My child, walk not thus! the earth will open under you." Child Okpweng answered, "How can the ground open? Whoever heard of the ground's opening underneath one?" — "It will," said Mother Okpweng, and she went out to get food for her family.

When she returned, she found that Child Okpweng had gone out, but he soon returned. She said, "Eké! My child, do not go walking thus! Do not close your ears to me!" But Child Okpweng refused to listen, and disobeyed every day.

One day, when Mother Okpweng had gone as usual to hunt food for her children, Child Okpweng went walking, and fell into a pit, in the bottom of which spears had been set up. So he died from the wounds. "Woe is me!" said Mother Okpweng, "my child has died because he refused to listen to my voice."<sup>2</sup>

## II. HOW PIGEON LEARNED THAT NO MAN STANDS ALONE.

Pigeon and Branch-of-Tree had been friends for many years. Truly, their friendship was great. Then one day Pigeon insulted Branch-of-Tree's wife. "Let us adjust this thing that has come between us, lest our friendship be broken," said he to Pigeon. "No, the matter will rest as it stands," answered Pigeon, and then he flew away. Up high into the air he flew, looking down scornfully at Branch-of-Tree. "Who are you? Why don't you follow me? See how you must remain just where you are! And do I need your friendship?" These and many other taunting and insulting remarks he made as he flew by Branch-of-Tree from time to time that day.

The latter had for answer only the words, "Come, let us renew our friendship!"

As the afternoon went on, Pigeon's flights by Branch-of-Tree became less frequent. After a time he ceased looking at his former friend as he passed him. Not even a single word did he speak. But every time he came within sight, Branch-of-Tree repeated, "Let us settle this matter!" Slower and slower became Pigeon's flight. His wings refused to bear him along. "When I get to Branch-of-Tree this time, I'll stop and rest, and talk over this matter," he finally said, as he started towards the place where his friend was. But before he reached there, his wings refused to longer carry him, and down Pigeon flew, *ne bim* dying as he struck the earth.

Thus it happens when a person despises and forsakes his friends.

<sup>1</sup> Okpweng, the small mouse-colored antelope, *Cephalophus melanorheus*.

<sup>2</sup> To listen to one's voice, native way of saying "to take one's advice."

## 12. HOW TURTLE GOT ALL LEOPARD'S FOOD.

Turtle and Leopard went to the forest and dug pits to kill animals. After a time, Turtle left Leopard, went to another part of the forest, and began digging pits alone. He not even told Leopard that he was going, but just left him. As he went home, he looked into Leopard's pits, where he found Hyrax in one of them. So he called Leopard, saying, "Come, let us look into our pits!" So they went. They found Hyrax in one of Leopard's pits. "Wait, I want to tell you about it." Turtle answered him, "And do animals talk palavers and tell us about themselves?" Then he wounded Hyrax with his spear, so that Hyrax died. Then they cut him up to carry him home.

Now Turtle said to Leopard, "Let us first roast the liver and eat it, before we go home!" Leopard agreed. So Turtle left the gall-bladder in with the liver, and also took many other bad-tasting and bitter herbs, putting them with the liver,<sup>1</sup> because he wished to eat it all himself. When it had finished cooking, Turtle took it over to Leopard, who tasted it. "That thing you have cooked surpasses anything in the forest for bitterness," he said. Turtle replied, "Your saying is true; give it to me, and I'll throw it all away." So Leopard gave him the bundle, because he did not know Turtle was deceiving him. Thus he spoiled the whole animal, Leopard not being able to eat a morsel.

## 13. HOW MEN FIRST LEARNED TO QUARREL.

It happened thus, that man dug pits to kill animals. Then he sent Son out into the forest to see if anything had fallen into the pits. Son found an animal which was called Bijo (Blame). So Son returned home and called the men of the village. They found the animal in the pit. "Those who have spears, come and kill me!" said Bijo. They came and threw their spears at him. "Do you see any wounds in me?" asked Bijo. "No."

"Now those who have bow-guns come and kill me!" said Bijo. So they came and shot arrows into him. "Do you see any wounds?" asked Bijo. "Now let those who have clubs come and kill me!" he said. So they who had clubs came and beat him. "Do you see any wounds?" he asked. "Now which party is to blame that you will eat no meat to-day?" Having spoken thus, he leaped out of the pit and disappeared in the forest.

The men now began to accuse and blame one another for having let the animal called Bijo get away; and soon there was a great quarrel, many men being wounded and even killed. Thus it happened that

<sup>1</sup> Tortoises and turtles are believed to have a decided preference for bitter and bad-tasting things.

from that day we find Bijo among the people, always leading them into strife.

#### 14. NEVER TELL THE THINGS OF TABOO YOU HAPPEN TO SEE.

Son-of-Man went to the forest, where he found a honey-tree. He cut the vines about the tree, and prepared it otherwise for climbing to the beehive. Thus he said to himself: "To-morrow I'll come and get the honey." Away he went.

Then came Kôn,<sup>1</sup> who also saw the tree. "I'll come to-morrow and get the honey," he said.

When he arrived the next morning, he divided himself into three parts. The part with his head climbed the tree. The part consisting of buttocks and legs he left at the foot of the tree. The trunk was put aside.

While this was going on, Son-of-Man came along, saw the thing that Kôn did, and watched the head-part climb the tree. He hid himself to see what would happen.

When Kôn finished taking out the honey from the tree, he descended. Suddenly he saw Son-of-Man where he was standing. "Where have you come from?" he asked. "Was it when I climbed up, or when I came down, when was it you came?" Son-of-Man thus: "While you were yet standing at the foot of the tree, then it was I came." So Kôn took the honey, dividing evenly with Son-of-Man. As he was doing this, for the second time he asked Son-of-Man when it was he came. Again Kôn was told, "While you were yet standing at the foot of the tree." Then Son-of-Man turned to leave for his village. But ere he left, Kôn asked him the same question again, twice. "You will not tell this thing to any other person," said Kôn as Son-of-Man left him.

When Son-of-Man reached his village, he called his wife, asking her to bring him his food. When she had given it to him, he gave her a portion of the honey. "Where have you gotten this?" she asked. "Go to your hut, I'll remain here," he answered. But again she asked where he had gotten the honey. So he told her the wonderful thing he had seen Kôn do. When he had ended telling her, Son-of-Man fell over dead. His wife cried the death-cry. Her mother heard it, and came rushing out to see what had happened. Wife of Son-of-Man told her all the things her husband had told her, and of his death. Then she too fell down dead.

From that day even to this, when Kôn gives a taboo, the sons of men refuse to break it.

<sup>1</sup> When a man dies, he becomes a *kôn*. They are believed to be small, black people-spirits.